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The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Letter dated 18 November 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith information regarding the situation in and around the Nagorno Karabagh conflict and increased war-mongering from Azerbaijani leadership creating obstacles for negotiations towards peaceful resolution of this conflict.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be distributed urgently as a document of the General Assembly, under items 56 (n) and 163, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Armen **Martirosyan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

04-61652 (E) 221104

Annex to the letter dated 18 November 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Azerbaijani warmongering - yesterday and today

Since the outbreak of the Karabagh conflict Azerbaijan has always reverted to the use of force instead of trying to address the issue peacefully. Even after the establishment of the ceasefire in 1994 and throughout the negotiating process of this decade the Azerbaijani rhetoric of the use of force and hate-mongering statements against the Armenians of Karabagh and Armenia continued unabated. Unfortunately, it has intensified in recent years. Azerbaijan has not committed itself to the negotiation process, rejecting all the proposals presented during recent years by the Minsk Group Co-Chairmen. These excerpts from their rhetorical speeches below are further examples of their unwillingness to engage in the search for peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict and to open up parallel processes to gain time for their military aspirations.

- President Ilham Aliyev has repeatedly told his nation that Azerbaijan could launch a new war in Karabagh: "At any moment we must be able to liberate our territories by military means. To achieve this we have everything." Aliyev predicts that Azerbaijan will soon become an economically strong State, while its military "superiority" will increase further. "Under these circumstances we cannot react positively to those calling us to compromise" (source: *Zerkalo*, 23 July 2004). Azerbaijan has been increasing its military spending to more than $217 million (source: International Institute for Strategic Studies *The Military Balance*) and buying more tanks, artillery and aircraft (source: United Nations Register of Conventional Arms). Aliyev warned that unless Armenians capitulate "we will all smash the heads of the Armenians" (source: Turan, via BBC Monitoring, 27 October 2000).

- Azerbaijani Defence Ministry spokesman Colonel Ramiz Melikov: "In the next 25-30 years there will be no Armenian state in the South Caucasus. This nation has been a nuisance for its neighbours and has no right to live in this region. Present-day Armenia was built on historical Azerbaijani lands. I believe that in 25 to 30 years these territories will once again come under Azerbaijan's jurisdiction" (source: *Zerkalo*, 4 August 2004). Following the brutal murder of an Armenian soldier at North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) English language courses in Hungary last February, Melikov qualified the confessed murderer Azerbaijani soldier Ramil Safarov as a "talented and disciplined officer". Melikov added that, "as an Azeri, I understand and support Safarov's actions". Melikov did not exclude similar attacks on Armenians in the future (source: Regnum, 25 February 2004).

- Azerbaijan's Ambassador to the Council of Europe Agshin Mekhtiyev warned of more attacks on individual Armenians, adding that he "would not advise Armenians to sleep easy in their beds". (source: *Zerkalo*, 24 February 2004) Parliament member and former Heydar Aliyev bodyguard Siyavush Novruzov told Terry Davis, envoy of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, that "similar incidents" could occur in PACE as well, unless the Karabagh conflict is settled in Baku's favour (source: Ekho, 27 February

2004). Azerbaijan's Human Rights Ombudsman Elmira Suleimanova said that Safarov should serve as "an example for Azerbaijani youth" (source: Zerkalo, 28 February 2004).

- The Azerbaijani Ministry of National Security has publicly and, according to media reports, clandestinely sponsored rhetoric and activities directed against Karabagh peace efforts. In 2004, this successor to the Soviet-era KGB held a public competition for the "best" films and books targeting Armenians, with Minister Namik Abbasov giving financial awards of up to $2,000 to the winners (source: www.azertag.com, 26 March 2004) Azeri officials have condemned track II peace-building contacts with Armenians, and groups linked to the Ministry of National Security have attacked Azeri peace activists (sources: Azerbaijan News Service (ANS), via BBC Monitoring, 3 November 2001, 16 April 2002; 525ci Gazet, 11 May 2002; Zerkalo, via BBC Monitoring, 30 April 2003; Institute for War and Peace Reporting Caucasus Report, 1 May 2003.

- Heydar Aliyev's National Security Adviser Vafa Gulizade demanded that "Armenians should be driven out of Azerbaijan forever". Unless Azerbaijan fights and drives all Armenians out, Gulizade believes that "Armenians would [eventually] buy up real estate in Baku ... They will try to take Azerbaijan into their hands in this way" (source: Azadlyq, via BBC Monitoring, 10 October 2001. "The entire Armenian population of Nagorno Karabagh should be moved from there ... This problem will not be resolved as long as Armenians are in Nagorno Karabagh" (source: Yeni Azerbaycan, via BBC Monitoring, 14 November 2001). "If they want autonomy on our land, let us have autonomy in Zangazur and Goyca [southern and eastern Armenia] which will enable Azerbaijan to reach Turkey by land" (source: ANS via BBC Monitoring, 6 April 2002).

- Azerbaijani member of Parliament from the ruling Yeni Azerbaycan Party, Asia Manafova: "Our people must repay the debt it owes to [the late President] Heydar Aliyev and free Karabagh from Armenian occupiers. To achieve this goal we are ready to follow the example of Chechen patriots and undertake acts of suicide bombing". Manafova called on other Parliament members to also become suicide bombers (source: www.regnum.ru, 15 December 2003. The pro-government ANS has been the most active Azeri television channel opposing any contacts with Armenians and arguing for war, suggesting, among other things, to recruit suicide bombers from among thousands of orphaned and homeless children in Azerbaijan (source: ANS, via BBC Monitoring, 13 October 2002).

- Azerbaijani Defence Minister General Safar Abiyev says that occasional violations of the 1994 ceasefire are "natural" since Azerbaijan is still "at war" (source: Sarg, via BBC Monitoring, 14 August 2003). Abiyev makes claims on Armenia's territory: "Armenia must always remember that what Azerbaijan accepted yesterday will not be accepted today and tomorrow. Azerbaijan will not want to have a separated State — meaning Nakhichevan, cut from the mainland Azerbaijan. This issue will be raised tomorrow" (source: Ekho, 16 May 2003). Asked if the Azeri army is ready "to go to Yerevan", Abiyev answers: "We can go even farther" (source: ANS, via BBC Monitoring, 22 March 2002). Abiyev claims that "The Armenian State was created on occupied Azeri lands with the area of 29,000 square kilometres" (source: www.ans.az, 7 December 2001).